The
COMMONWEAL

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A Disgraceful Surrender

THE WEALTH of more exciting topics for news and comment, including such items as the horrendous meat shortage, has completely obliterated public concern over what has been transpiring with regard to the International Refugee Organization of the United Nations. This subject was dealt with at length in THE COMMONWEAL for September 6. The salient facts cannot be repeated too often. There are in Europe at least 1,000,000 persons who fall under the category of refugees and most of whom originated in areas now dominated by Russia. Out of this total, four-fifths are Christians. The only solution for them is to be allowed to build new lives in other parts of the world.

Russia has consistently stood in the way of any program intended to improve their lot, insisting that all those formerly living in areas now under her domination should be repatriated willy-nilly. What would happen to these repatriates need scarcely be specified. The original proposal for an International Refugee Organization included a budget small enough in all conscience, $60,000,000 being allocated for broad-scale resettlement of refugees and displaced persons. It was further provided that another $100,000,000 should be used for the same purpose out of German reparations. During September, under Russian pressure, this budget was radically cut by the Committee on Finances of the IRO. The most recent budget provides for only $5,000,000 for "Large Scale Resettlement Activities." German reparations are not mentioned. This miserable pittance represents an outright capitulation to Russia's demands. Because of disagreement among the members of the Economic and Social Council, the whole project is to go before the General Assembly when it meets this month. Every effort should be made to induce the General Assembly to work out a solution of this problem compatible with human decency.

Factory Workers in Fields

AGRICULTURE is a peculiar occupation, or it has seemed so anyway in this country since everything else except agriculture has not seemed strange. The organization of agriculture has progressed far differently than that of industry and by no means as tightly, and unions, particularly, have lagged out in the country.

Of course, there are numerous, and at different times and in different ways, powerful farm organizations: the National Grange, the Farm Bureau Federation, the Farmers Union (Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union of America), which has been growing sturdily as representative of independent agriculturists, the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, of rather militant recent history, and, doubtless, etc. In the recent Chicago convention of the American Federation of Labor, the newer National Farm Labor Union, the newest affiliate of the AFL, had an opportunity to proclaim its vigorous intentions.

The Farm Labor Union has enough clear and needed purposes to bring expectations and hopes of growth and success. Their president, H. L. Mitchell, proclaimed the program over the air on October 12th: They are going after the farm labor employed by the factories in the fields—2,000,000 men, they claim—and are not planning to use efforts trying to organize the hired help and occasional workers on family type farms. Practically speaking, Mr. Mitchell sees little difference between the huge farm operations and big industry, "except that hired workers on the big farms are still being treated as second-class citizens."

> These large plantations, which operate in competition with the small farmer, often wring their low-production costs out of the sweat and blood of hired hands, working for long hours at low wages in peak seasons and who then are turned adrift for months at a time.
>
> The National Farm Labor Union is determined to win better working and living conditions for these farm laborers and their families. By organization and collective bargaining we hope to gain for them year-round employment on farms and in seasonal industries.

It is a sad and hard fact that few of the employers of these men seem to face the fact of

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their industrialized situation, or, if they do face it, spend their efforts in trying to keep the men in industrial conditions which would not go for an instant in any organized, urban industry. The government fails to, likewise, when farm labor is excluded from the regular social benefits set up for factory employees. A strong union is the best tool to force the issue.

Two interesting notes in the speech of President Mitchell were his distinctions between the farm factories and the family farms, and his hint that the union will try to work out some way to give a man a mixed employment: on the farms during the seasons when needed, and at other seasons in industry. It would be damaging not to recognize that the economy of the small farm is not the same as the economy of modern mass industry, and reforms and revolutions planned to fit the maladies of mass industry frequently do not fit the pattern of the small and family farm at all. And the seasonal views do work in beautifully with the wider spreading efforts to secure for all American workers a decent *annual* wage, with, presumably, an intelligent allotment of labors throughout the seasons.

Food Report

INDIA is today far and away the world's worst famine area, while *mass* starvation has been averted in Europe thanks to the aggregate efforts of governments, UNRRA, individual food packages from the more fortunate countries and various charitable agencies. Such is the substance of the latest world food reports. Good harvests have had much to do with forestalling widespread famine, if not individual hunger and malnutrition, in many parts of the world.

This modicum of success over so wide a terrain underlines the failure of the nations to provide for the crisis in India. For over a month grain stocks have been too low to permit distribution of rations in Travancore, an area on the southern tip of India inhabited by six million souls. The half-starved people of far more populous Madras are threatened with an additional drastic cut in rations in the course of the next week. The next Indian rice crop is not harvested until January, the next wheat crop in May.

The responsibility for India's famine is not ascribable to any one nation. Brazil and Malaya have, for instance, failed to supply but half of the rice they had promised India for this year. The American boxcar shortage and then the crippling maritime strikes have held up half of our own vital shipments of grain to India for September. That is deplorable enough. But, Food for Freedom reports, the just-announced American allocations of grain for the last quarter of 1946 to meet India's terrible want are 25,000 tons of corn (in December), 34,000 tons of sorghum and not a grain of wheat. And our Department of Agriculture is again said to be expressing fears as to the effect of our surpluses on farm prices!

International Oil Co-op

HERE in the United States many economists and business men still dismiss cooperatives as of relatively minor importance. Statistics, they feel, cannot lie. Co-ops account for so small a proportion of our national consumption that despite sizable annual percentage increases they do not have a big place in our national economy. There is a lot of truth in this view. Yet American cooperators have plugged away in consistent fashion: fertilizer companies in Ohio, oil companies in several midwestern states, public utilities all over the South and West and many others have become conscious of their presence. A "National Tax Equality Association" has been formed to impede the forward march of the co-ops by legislative means—to preserve wide profit margins.

In many other countries the cooperative movement is much further developed and plays a more significant rôle. So that when the International Cooperative Alliance makes threatening gestures against big business at its first postwar conference, at Zurich, Switzerland, it is no idle threat. To throw down the gauntlet to the capitalist system in general and "predatory private monopolies" in particular recalls the sort of resolutions adopted by political parties and at major labor union conventions. It is oratorical in style, sweeping in pretensions. Yet this is no mere beating of the air.

The Zurich conference directly implemented its anti-monopoly and anti-capitalist aspirations by planning an International Cooperative Petroleum Association with an authorized capital of $15,000,000. Oil cooperatives in 22 nations from all sectors of the globe have agreed to participate. The ICPA is particularly interested in securing a share of the petroleum of the Middle East to supplement what it can obtain in Venezuela and elsewhere. But it also has far loftier ambitions. It believes that if the oil of the Middle East could be internationally administered and equitably allotted, the danger of exhaustion of resources or of war among the Big Powers over the area could be drastically reduced. Co-ops are still far from being in a position to bring this about generally, but they believe world trade on a cooperative basis is the only alternative to the fatal race for strategic raw materials and markets, to imperialism and war.

Essentially democratic and gradualistic the co-ops do not find that time is on their side. Their system of non-profit private enterprise provides a happy alternative to state socialism and

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obviates the dangers embodied in centralized state control. If only there were some way of stopping the clock . . .

French Canada

THE ARTICLE, "Fight over Neutrality," published in our columns in August and describing a recent controversy in the Province of Quebec, has provoked a good deal of discussion among Canadians, much of it warmly approving but also much of it resentful. This article was deliberately intended to have a wider frame of reference than the specific controversy with which it dealt. The intention was to cast further light upon the psychological effects of what the popes have called "excessive nationalism," not as we see it in Canada alone but wherever it may exist. It was particularly concerned with the evil which arises from a psychological identification of nation and religion.

That this has been sporadically true among French Canadians is beyond denial. It has likewise been the case in Argentina and Spain, in Russia and Yugoslavia and countless other regions. Correspondence provoked by this article shows that many French Canadians are themselves disturbed by a tendency which the article regretted—but which the article was very careful to point out by no means characterizes the bulk of French Canadians. The Jesuit monthly, *Relations,* in its September issue discusses this question at length, coming to the conclusion that it is "the feeling for national solidarity among French Canadians which gets on [THE COMMONWEAL author's] nerves. He does not fail to twist this legitimate feeling and to attribute to it sinister implications of 'racism,' of 'chauvinism' and even occasionally of 'anti-Semitism.'" Thus we find ourselves in the category of those excoriating everything French Canadian and unwilling to grant that anything good can come from that Nazareth.

This, of course, is utterly to distort the attitude THE COMMONWEAL has always taken regarding French Canadians. We warmly applaud their efforts to preserve their way of life and their culture, both of which have things to teach us and to teach the world. Their positive achievements and their economic aspirations deserve a sympathetic attention from the people of the United States which they have all too rarely been given. And perhaps the greatest of French Canadian achievements consists in their conquest of an environment which has repeatedly been victorious over men of lesser stature. But to suggest that no one this side of the border has the right to object when he is presented with definite evidence of a perversion in certain minds and hearts of that French Canadian feeling of solidarity which in general is an admirable and beautiful thing seems to us merely a demonstration that this feeling, like all good feelings, *can* be perverted. Genuine friendship and admiration prompt these observations.

A Comment on the Times

OUR READERS have doubtless noted that the Holy See has declared "ipso facto" excommunicate any Catholic who assisted in the condemnation of Archbishop Stepinatz. The meaning of this declaration is that no juridical procedure whatever is necessary to convict in his own conscience any such individual. It is not without irony that one of the most recent of previous applications of this penalty was to any Catholic who might seek to induce a person of Greek or Slav rite to change to the Latin rite—an action intended to reduce precisely that rivalry of which Archbishop Stepinatz is in part the victim.

More Photographs and King George

THERE IS the stadium in Russia for the athletes who belong to the club called Dynamo—as if it were the name of a ballet for robots—and there are thousands of men and men in the stadium doing calisthenics and certainly it is better for all these people to be moving about instead of sitting in an American stadium watching the two times nine in the world series or the two times eleven at football. You do not know what the Georgians, the Armenians, the Little Russians and all the other kinds of Russians in the stadium, the boys and the girls, the muscular girls, are thinking about; you cannot read in their hearts; you do not know if they feel compelled to be where they are—the delegations from all Russia—or if they are happy to be where they are. It would be hard for an American to be one of five thousand Americans standing with bare legs anywhere—unless it were at military training—throwing a medicine ball in the air in time to a brass band. Perhaps these Russians are all right and having a wonderful time, all five thousand of them, and when you look at them in the photographs each one of them is different, and it would be possible to separate them from each other after their performance for *Life,* and for Stalin, in the Dynamo Stadium, and talk to any one of them and dance one at a time with the two thousand five hundred girls.

You could have danced with the girls in Nuremberg when they also played with hoops and medi-

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cine balls and the flags fluttered on the high flag poles round the stadium and the sun shone brightly over the proud youth of Germany.

The flags are above the Dynamo Stadium as once they were proud in Nuremberg and in Rome. The flags are lovely and bright as they always are no matter whose flags they are, and they are always in the paintings of the French impressionists without meaning anything in the way of menace. The flags are in the New England villages, with the monument to the war dead and the white steeple on one side of the common. The flags are on the ships, no matter of what nation; the wind snaps them tight and you look past them at the sea with the whitecaps and the green moving waters, and the flag is above the horizon and now it is below the horizon.

In the Moscow pictures it is not the flags that disturb, and it is not the young people, although when you look at them you wonder what they will do when they no longer can play with the hoops and the balls. When you look at five thousand strong and youthful bodies it is hard not to start thinking in terms of insurance charts, or vital statistics or something; when you look at one young man or at one young woman, love makes the girl, the young man immortal; when you look at so many all together it is hard not to think of them growing old all together, not to think of them as a "generation," presently dead, presently replaced; it is hard not to think of them as something that can be used—for the nation, the state. Yet all these young people will leave the Dynamo Stadium; they will fall out of formation; they will travel back to one of Gogol's desperate towns, and the only trouble is that once they get home they will make hoops out of the forest trees, they will skin the cow and make a ball, they will call in all the children who are wandering in the steppe (even the fifty-mile-an-hour "gazelle boy" or another one who has not been caught) and drill them to jump through the hoop, lie in a circle and balance it on their toes, and kick, throw the ball and hold it on their noses.

But some will escape from physical culture into work or love or both, and some, sooner than others, into loneliness and death. The Italians may have put Italians into a stadium; the Germans, Germans into a Nuremberg that exists no longer; the Russians are presenting their youth now in the Dynamo Stadium, but they cannot set it apart from our youth, from any youth; the Russian youth is subject to all the unforeseeable that will be the life of any child, that is the life of all who live, in hunger, disappointment, illusion, but also in love and faith, until they die.

The flags are all right, the young people are no worse off than any Shropshire lad, so that when you look at the pictures of the Russian Stadium it is only the giant blown-up photograph of one man that disheartens you. There is this enormous super-colossal sized image of one man, this face like a mountain that is of a man (that is no longer like a man's face).

The image is Stalin's, but it does not matter whose image is anywhere. There was Mussolini's face everywhere, and Hitler's; there is Tito's face. It is not because they were the faces of nazis and fascists and are now the faces of communists that they are hateful; it is only because they are the faces of one man, displayed so incessantly and in so many places that they have become no longer the image of a person but that of a stupid Roman Emperor on a pedestal with people bowing when they pass. There was a time when General de Gaulle's image was too often displayed, and before him there was the image of Pétain, and so it is not because it is Stalin who towers above the five thousand youths in the Stadium; it could be anyone else and it would be as bad: the worst will be when the huge human image that personifies the state—stencilled on the walls of every town, over every stadium and in every schoolhouse—has become that of some abstract, cold athlete with a hoop—or a yoke—passionless, inexorably demanding the warm life of others to fill its sightless inhumanity.

Once, when the British had won the Battle of Britain perhaps, or when in Africa they advanced toward victory, or when, near the end, the bombs fell on London day after day and there was no rest for the British, it seemed very necessary to say something here in New York about their courage. It is curious that all we could manage to do was to talk about the green English fields, the hedgerows dividing them, the English elms and the rivers. All we could do was to suggest that it would be beautiful when the English could drift again in the afternoon, punting or rowing on the rivers, holding the boat close to the river bank under the outspreading trees. It seemed that one had to approach the English obliquely lest one's sympathy and admiration be not considered entirely for granted.

Once again there is this Europe threatened, and this Europe we have loved divided harshly against itself; once again there is this same difficulty in saying something about England which will show some emotions without speaking too loudly. So that there are these enormous heads like obscene balloons moored in the sky over Europe; but in England there is the *Sphere,* the *Illustrated London News,* and in their photographs there are the tennis champions, the cricketers at Lords, the bride and groom leaving the church, the lawn party at Sandringham and, every now and then, this quiet man in one uniform or another, or in a gray top hat at Ascot, King George.

C. G. PAULDING.

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The Poteen Maker

MICHAEL McLAVERTY

WHEN HE taught me about fifteen years ago he was an old man near his retirement, and when he would pass through the streets of the little town on his way from school you would hear the women talking about him as they stood at their doors knitting or nursing their babies: "Poor man, he's done . . . Killing himself . . . Digging his own grave!" With my bags of books under my arm I could hear them, but I could never understand why they said he was digging his own grave, and when I would ask my mother she would scold me: "Take your dinner, like a good boy, and don't be listening to the hard backbiters of this town. Your father has always a good word for Master Craig—so that should be enough for you!"

"But why do they say he's killing himself?"

"What do who say? Didn't I tell you to take your dinner and not be repeating what the idle gossips of this town are saying. Listen to me, son! Master Craig is a decent, good-living man—a kindly man that would go out of his way to do you a good turn. If Master Craig was in any other town he'd have got a place in the new school at the square—instead of being stuck forever in that wee poky bit of school at the edge of town!"

It was true that the school was small—a two-roomed ramshackle of a place that lay at the edge of the town beyond the last street lamp. We all loved it. Around it grew a few trees, their trunks hacked with boys' names and pierced with nibs and rusty drawing-pins. In summer when the windows were open we could hear the leaves rubbing together, and in winter see the raindrops hanging on the bare twigs.

It was a draughty place and the master was always complaining of the cold, and even in the early autumn he would wear his overcoat in the classroom and rub his hands together: "Boys, it's very cold today. Do you feel it cold?" and to please him we would answer: "Yes, sir, 'tis very cold." He would continue to rub his hands and he would look out at the old trees casting their leaves or at the broken spout that flung its tail of rain against the window. He always kept his hands clean and three times a day he would wash them in a basin and wipe them on a roller towel affixed to the inside of his press. He had a hanger for his coat and a brush to brush away the chalk that accumulated on the collar in the course of the day.

In the wet, windy month of November three buckets were placed on the top of the desks to catch the drips that plopped here and there from the ceiling, and those drops made different music according to the direction of the wind. When the buckets were filled the master always called me to empty them, and I would take them one at a time and swirl them into the drain at the street and stand for a minute gazing down at the wet roofs of the town or listen to the rain pecking at the lunch-papers scattered about on the cinders.

"What's it like outside?" he always asked when I came in with the empty buckets.

"Sir, 'tis very bad."

He would write sums on the board and tell me to keep an eye on the class, and out to the porch he would go and stand in grim silence watching the rain nibbling at the puddles. Sometimes he would come in and I would see him sneak his hat from the press and disappear for five or ten minutes. We would fight then with rulers or paper-darts till our noise would disturb the mistress next door and in she would come and stand with lips compressed, her finger in her book. There was silence as she upbraided us: "Mean, low, good-for-nothing corner boys. Wait'll Mister Craig comes back and I'll let him know the angels he has. And I'll give him special news about *you!*"—and she shakes her book at me. "An altar boy on Sunday and a corner boy for the rest of the week!" We would let her barge away, the buckets plink-plonking as they filled up with rain and her own class beginning to hum now that she was away from them.

When Mr. Craig came back he would look at us and ask if we disturbed Miss Lagan. Our silence or our tossed hair always gave him the answer. He would correct the sums on the board, flivell the pages of a book with his thumb, and listen to us reading; and occasionally he would glance out of the side-window at the river that flowed through the town and, above it, the bedraggled row of houses whose tumbling yard-walls sheered to the water's edge. "The loveliest county in Ireland is County Down!" he used to say, with a sweep of his arm to the river and the tin cans and the chalked walls of the houses.

During that December he was ill for two weeks and when he came back amongst us he was greatly failed. To keep out the draughts he nailed perforated plywood over the ventilators and stuffed blotting paper between the wide crevices at the jambs of the door. There were muddy marks of a ball on one of the windows and on one pane a long crack with fangs at the end of it: "So, someone has drawn the River Ganges while I was away," he said; and whenever he came to the geography of India he would refer to the Ganges delta by pointing to the cracks on the pane.

When our ration of coal for the fire was used up he would send me into the town with a bucket, a coat over my head to keep off the rain, and the money in my fist to buy a stone of coal. He always gave me a penny to buy sweets for myself, and I can always remember that he kept his money in a

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waistcoat pocket. Back again I would come with the coal and he would give me disused exercise books to light the fire. "Chief stoker!" he called me, and the name has stuck to me to this day.

It was at this time that the first snow had fallen, and someone by using empty potato bags had climbed over the glass-topped wall and stolen the school coal, and for some reason Mr. Craig did not send me with the bucket to buy more. The floor was continually wet from our boots, and our breaths frosted the windows. Whenever the door opened a cold draught would rush in and gulp down the breath-warmed air in the room. We would jig our feet and sit on our hands to warm them. Every half-hour Mr. Craig would make us stand and while he lilted *O'Donnel Abu* we did a series of physical exercises which he had taught us, and in the excitement and the exaltation we forgot about our sponging boots and the snow that pelted against the windows. It was then that he did his lessons on Science; and we were delighted to see the bunsen burner attached to the gas bracket which hung like an inverted T from the middle of the ceiling. The snoring bunsen seemed to heat up the room and we all gathered round it, pressing in on top of it till he scattered us back to our places with the cane: "Sit down!" he would shout. "There's no call to stand. Everybody will be able to see!"

The cold spell remained, and over and over again he repeated one lesson in Science, which he called: *Evaporation and Condensation.*

"I'll show you how to purify the dirtiest of water," he had told us. "Even the filthiest water from the old river could be made fit for drinking purposes." In a glass trough he had a dark brown liquid and when I got his back turned I dipped my finger in it and it tasted like treacle or burnt candy, and then I remembered about packets of brown sugar and tins of treacle I had seen in his press.

He placed some of the brown liquid in a glass retort and held it aloft to the class: "In this retort I have water which I have discolored and made impure. In a few minutes I'll produce from it the clearest of spring water." And his weary eyes twinkled, and although we could see nothing funny in that, we smiled because he smiled.

The glass retort was set up with the flaming bunsen underneath, and as the liquid was boiling, the steam was trapped in a long-necked flask upon which I sponged cold water. With our eyes we followed the bubbling mixture and the steam turning into drops and dripping rapidly into the flask. The air filled with a biscuity smell, and the only sound was the snore of the bunsen. Outside was the cold air and the falling snow. Presently the master turned out the gas and held up the flask containing the clear water.

"As pure as crystal!" he said, and we watched him pour some of it into a tumbler, hold it in his delicate fingers, and put it to his lips. With wonder we watched him drink it and then our eyes travelled to the dirty, cakey scum that had congealed on the glass sides of the retort. He pointed at this with his ruler: "The impurities are sifted out and the purest of pure water remains." And for some reason he gave his roguish smile. He filled up the retort again with the dirty brown liquid and repeated the experiment until he had a large bottle filled with the purest of pure water.

The following day it was still snowing and very cold. The master filled up the retort with the clear liquid which he had stored in the bottle: "I'll boil this again to show you that there are no impurities left." So, once again we watched the water bubbling, turning to steam, and then to shining drops. Mr. Craig filled up his tumbler: "As pure as crystal," he said, and then the door opened and in walked the Inspector. He was muffled to the ears and snow covered his hat and his attaché case. We all stared at him—he was the old, kind man whom we had seen before. He glanced at the bare firegrate and at the closed windows with their sashes edged with snow. The water continued to bubble in the retort, giving out its pleasant smell.

The Inspector shook hands with Mr. Craig and they talked and smiled together, the Inspector now and again looking towards the empty grate and shaking his head. He unrolled his scarf and flicked the snow from off his shoulders and from his attaché case. He sniffed the air, rubbed his frozen hands together, and took a black notebook from his case. The snow ploofed against the windows and the wind hummed under the door.

"Now, boys," Mr. Craig continued, holding up the tumbler of water from which a thread of steam wriggled in the air. He talked to us in a strange voice and told us about the experiment as if we were seeing it for the first time. Then the Inspector took the warm tumbler and questioned us on our lesson. "It should be perfectly pure water," he said, and he sipped at it. He tasted its flavor. He sipped at it again. He turned to Mr. Craig. They whispered together, the Inspector looking towards the retort which was still bubbling and sending out its twirls of steam to be condensed to water of purest crystal. He laughed loudly, and we smiled when he again put the tumbler to his lips and this time drank it all. Then he asked us more questions and told us how, if we were shipwrecked, we could make pure water from the salt-sea water.

Mr. Craig turned off the bunsen and the Inspector spoke to him. The master filled up the Inspector's tumbler and poured out some for himself in a cup. Then the Inspector made jokes with us, listened to us singing, and told us we were the best class in Ireland. Then he gave us a few sums to do in our books. He put his hands in his pockets

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and jingled his money, rubbed a little peep-hole in the breath-covered window and peered out at the loveliest sight in Ireland. He spoke to Mr. Craig again and Mr. Craig shook hands with him and they both laughed. The Inspector looked at his watch. Our class was let out early, and while I remained behind to tidy up the Science apparatus the master gave me an empty treacle tin to throw in the bin and told me to carry the Inspector's case up to the station. I remember that day well as I walked behind them through the snow, carrying the attaché case, and how loudly they talked and laughed as the snow whirled cold from the river. I remember how they crouched together to light their cigarettes, how match after match was thrown on the road, and how they walked off with the unlighted cigarettes still in their mouths. At the station Mr. Craig took a penny from his waistcoat pocket and he told me I was the best boy in Ireland. . . .

When I was coming from his funeral last week —God have mercy on him—I recalled that wintry day and the feel of the cold penny and how much more I know about Mr. Craig than I did then. On my way out of the town—I don't live there now—I passed the school and saw a patch of new slates on the roof and an ugly iron barrier near the door to keep the home-going children from rushing headlong onto the road. I knew if I had looked at the trees I'd have seen rusty drawing-pins stuck into their rough flesh. But I passed by; I heard there was a young teacher in school now, with an array of colored pencils in his pocket.

Mom in the Kitchen

ANNE FREMANTLE

SOME WRITERS are great because of what they write; others because of how; there has always been in the literature of every country this bifurcation, this distinct parting of the ways, between the whats and the hows. In his now classic "Aspects of the Novel" E. M. Forster defines the what as providing the ponderous, elephantine forward march of history, the hows as contributing the slow, crab-like movement sideways. Both are integrally necessary to the proper functioning of humanity's creative imagination, as linked as matter and energy, and as inseparable: they are as essential as the thirty spokes and the twenty-nine spaces between the spokes were to Lao Tze's wheel. From the earliest days those who have reflected upon the arts have indicated these two aspects by the couplet: form (style)—substance (matter). To apply their definition to literature, Balzac and Browning, Dickens and Dumas, Tolstoi and Trollope, may be taken as dissimilar exemplifications of substance: to illustrate the crab-like movement, Rimbaud and Rilke, Proust and Pater, James Joyce and Gertrude Stein may serve.

Yet, in each work of literature, form and substance must contribute each at least a minimal share, or the balance is upset: whichever is predominant must still participate in the other's nature, as in a proper diet protein and starch both have their place, and in most savory dishes they are variously combined. Lose that balance, lack that modicum, and the result is someone like Emile Zola or Don Marquis, who, in spite of many great qualities, cannot, because of certain exaggerations, share in the simplest, most universal immortality. They are unpalatable, simply: the gastronomic order, that is violated by an excess of starch or protein, is paralleled in literature. This is not to decry stylization, or a certain solid dullness: Defoe, Meredith, Peacock or Max Beerbohm may aggravate and tease the reader by their affectations, but he reads on, and so will millions after him; so the tedious *longueurs* of Scott, or the artificiality of Schiller's clumsy construction may induce yawns, yet "Hermann and Dorothea" retains its place in literatures, and "Guy Mannering" keeps a steady toehold.

The best books, of course, have both form and substance, matter and energy, and it is only in some Parnassian dissecting room that anyone could weigh the protein against the starch of, say, Thomas Mann's "The Magic Mountain," Kafka's "The Castle," William Faulkner's "Light in August" or Arthur Koestler's "Darkness at Noon," to quote four masterpieces of this century.

Gertrude Stein was great in both these two ways, but not at once, and not to the same extent. She has written so infinitely better about herself than anyone will ever write about her, that it is profoundly presumptuous to assay biographical data about this paragon of autobiographers. But, since she lived so long in France and loved it so, she might appreciate a graveside threnody: that ritual "éloge" spoken as part of the *pompes funèbres* and generally enjoyed by all present, including, it is to be hoped, also the deceased. She was born in 1874, in Pennsylvania, that state which, of all the forty-eight, has welcomed most immigrants from Europe, because it gave Europeans, "Wine, like France, beer, like the Rhine, and very green grass like England." After early years in Vienna and Paris, she went through high school at Oakland, California, where she played on the Pacific beach with Chinese, Indian, Slovak, Swedish and Mexican Americans. She came East to college, to Radcliffe, where she specialized in the study of cloud formations, and was William James's favorite pupil. She published her psychological experiments, and when she came to her final examination, she scribbled on her philosophy paper, "Dear Mr. James, I am very sorry, but I have been to the opera five nights this week, and

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it is such a beautiful day that I could not possibly answer these questions," and left, to receive next day Dr. James's reply: "Dear Miss Stein, I entirely agree with you, and think you are a very sensible person, yours sincerely. P.S. of course you obtained the highest possible marks for your philosophy paper." Gertrude then went to study medicine at Johns Hopkins, where she specialized in the anatomy of the brain; Dr. James had predicted a brilliant future for her in this field, but she left without her medical degree, and went to live in Paris. "America is my country, and Paris is my home town, and it is as it has come to be," she wrote, and elsewhere, "I have lived half of my life in Paris not the half that made me, but the half in which I made what I made."

★

She published her first full-sized book in 1905, "Three Lives," a study of three women of different racial backgrounds that is perhaps even more valid today than when it was first written. Melanchtha, the Negress, who was always so busy running after things that she never had time to enjoy them, and the good German, who punished the little dogs for behaving as little dogs will, are still admirably solid. As yet, Gertrude Stein was not experimenting: for the average reader, she is at her best in this her earlier period, and even in her latest, when look, she has come through. For, latterly, having worked all the words she ever used overtime, like Humpty Dumpty, she has paid them their wages, and the extras, and she has let them go, and they have returned of themselves, come Sunday, to lean over her fence, and chat, and a good time is had by all—this is especially the case in "Paris, France," "Wars I Have Seen" and "Brewsie and Willie" which is simply GI conversation after the war, and is so poignant that it hurts, and so funny that it heals.

In between she wrote her experimental books and her play, "Four Saints in Three Acts." She used to write at night, after wiping from her memory the swarm of phantasms that it had brought in from the slippery senses, so that nothing was left except the difference between words and their things, and things and their words—a distinction no one in the United States had made before. She is best remembered, perhaps, for her long friendship with Picasso, on whom she wrote often and wrote well. She knew, liked and patronized many other French painters—she loved buying pictures. But her supreme affinity for Picasso was not accidental, for life appeared to her always in the form of repetition, and she remained always a pragmatist. "Knowledge," she declared, "was presently held, and this present is in continual flux; time and change and chance are the realities of the universe. In this seen world no one thing changes, for all things are change. A composition is what is seen, and there is singularly nothing that makes a difference, a difference in beginning and in the middle and in the ending except that each generation has something different at which they are all looking." Commenting on the long period during which both she and Picasso had been neglected, and the suddenness with which they were accepted, she said "there is almost not an interval. For a very long time everybody refuses and then almost without a pause almost everybody accepts" and, again, "masterpieces," she says, "are knowing that there is no identity, and producing while identity is not." With Aquinas and with Pareto, she would say that a thing's essence is its circumference, not its culmination, its existence, not its end.

It is very difficult to estimate her effect upon the English language, or upon English literature, because she is so solid and single a character that, now she is recently gone, there is a great gap, a hole torn in the earth where this tree fell, and it may be some time before the importance of her impact can properly be evaluated. She had the primordial qualities of the American nature: an ampleness of good rich soil. "I am I because my little dog knows me," she said, and sensibly declared that if the name of anything or of everything is dead, then the only way to keep it alive is to rename it. There were no flies on Gertrude Stein, and she was not nearly as green as she was cabbage-looking.

★

Her own success surprised and delighted her. It did not come early, but, when she returned to America after almost quarter of a century's absence, she found herself, in 1935, "the Dr. Johnson of American letters and her own Boswell." She loved life, and adored its movement, and this rare, strange, moving reunion of a poet and her country, that was at the same time an invention and a great discovery, touched the imagination of contemporary America. Gertrude Stein became a best-seller, a celebrity, a widely popular and fêted figure: front-page news and headline stuff. The White House gave her a tea, and San Francisco the freedom of the city; she was lioness at a Hollywood banquet, and was made a Kentucky colonel. Her success was just as great at Oxford and Cambridge where she lectured in 1936. Back in Paris, she resumed her Sundays, and the crowd grew always greater, but she never turned anyone away; she was delighted hostess to Chinese who came to see her pictures, to Yokohama students, or to women's clubs from Jersey City; to Paris crowds or to English literary folk. She asked nothing of her guests, except that they come: her friends sat round her, not as though visiting, but as though at table, and she distributed nourishment as a good housewife does,

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to all who came: first come, first served, but all were well fed, and all felt satisfied.

Ernest Hemingway, Sherwood Anderson, William Faulkner and many other writers were not only her friends, but owed much to her. Edmund Wilson has described her: "most of us balk at her soporific rigmaroles, her echolaliac incantations, her half-witted sounding catalogues of numbers. Yet we are always aware of her presence in the background of contemporary literature, placidly ruminating the gradual development of the processes of being, registering the vibrations of a psychological country, like some august human seismograph whose charts we haven't been trained to read." And Sherwood Anderson sums her up thus: "in the great kitchen of my fanciful world I see Miss Stein standing; there is a most sweet and gracious aroma. Along the wall are many shining pots and pans, and there are immense jars of fruits, jellies and preserves. Something is going on in the great room, for Miss Stein is a worker in words with the same loving touch in her strong fingers as an American woman of the old sort who cares for handmade goodies and who scorns factory-made foods."

She wrote her own account of how she endured the German invasion; it tried, but did not seriously disturb, her clear spirit and her quiet, studious, frugal way of living. A black rug over her shoulders, a white poodle on her knees, she survived the war. Then, in 1945 as in 1935, suddenly, she was news: American journalists moving up with the armies of the victorious Allies discovered and interviewed her: she made fast friends with dozens of homesick American doughboys, and for their sake let some of them fly her to Berlin.

She was always intensely aware that the word is also the Word; as Victor Hugo put it

le mot
est vie, esprit, germe, ouragan, vertu, jeu
car le mot, c'est le verbe, et le verbe, c'est Dieu.

and she was no less aware that the word is also man, the L. C. D. of man: the illiterate servant girl or the average enlisted private first class. In her long, very well-spent life she came full circle: from the characters in "Three Lives" to "Brewsie and Willie," her latest form is her first. She deserved well of her country, and of her world, for America, and the English language, were in good hands so long as Mom was in the kitchen.

An Epilogue

Watch from the shore the ship, the vision moving
Farther and farther off. Ah, what shall touch you now,
Girl, clean motion in the sun, hand waving.
What reach across that distance? Never this grieving,
Never myself again, nor what I know.

Watch from the shore the sea, the waters turning
Darkly the pictures of the dark. Lean,
Desperate tides of the unpossessable heart,
Lean to the mothering dark. Divide from me:
The darkness is your secret and your dream.

But Oedipus will demand to know, demand
To see, and having seen, gouge out his eyes.
He will disown the comfort of his lands,
Publish the private love with public terror,
Turn all his knowledge outward with his cries.

Hamlet will turn his savage comedy
Against the innocent beauty, rebuke the mourners
With laughter in the grave. Exiled and torn
From unsuspecting love he takes no friend:
Thou wouldst not think, Horatio, where he turns.

This is the play. This is the mask that means
The lonely elevation, the measured moving
Above the chorus to the tragic law;
The order disciplining speech to verse
And living to the single act of loving.

Release the dark uncomprehending storm,
See pity and fear enormous as the wind:
The poem will teach its justice to your tears;
The mother will be told, though on her knees,
Woman, what has this man to do with thee?

"What means this play?" O king, the chorus was
Too great for Elsinore. Widen the curtain:
Beyond the stage, beyond the melting walls,
Tobias wanders, Joseph is tried, and Job
Lies wondering in the shadow of a cross.

And over Egypt through the days and nights
The chosen agonistes know the laws
And liturgy of anguish: in the blurred mass
Of countless hands converging, strain to offer
Toward one day the single terrible Mask.

The poem is alive! Wide as the earth,
It narrows to the zodiac of the blood;
Its single way, though all the pulses shake
(Lost garden, O lost country of the womb!)—
The one purgation, the surgery of shock.

The play, the play, my king! Attend: this is
Cordelia, mercy in her hands. And here
Is Perdita, the exiled innocent
Bringing the exiles home. The victim is
Become the priest, and love the sacrament.
And love that looks now from the darkening sea
Will turn, will not return (but keen surprise
Of girl and birds!)—will turn, be torn, to be
Its burning sign beyond the death of days,
A terror and a testament of praise.

HENRY RAGO.

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A View of America

PHILIP BURNHAM

AMERICA, from the Presidential Range of New Hampshire to the placid waters of Lake Worth behind the East Coast of the Florida peninsula, is a huge land of natural beauty, physical diversity and material riches. It is a land of opportunity for individuals and for all society: open opportunity so spectacularly free from limitation of material resources and from inhibiting custom that America is something new under the sun.

Money is the common denominator of American life. It is spread among the people in quantities fantastic in contrast to all countries of the old world. (They have candy and country clubs, the bursting stores of the Bowery, Pullman cars and the luxury hotels from Maine to Key West.) Money is the actual force which opens bewildering possibilities for vast numbers of people to choose their way and form of life; and at the same time it is an almost abstract symbol representing unlimited, undifferentiated potentiality.

America stops there: the potentiality is taken as act. Americans labor and gather money and the materials means and organization which permit unlimited choice. "Do what you will" is also inscribed over the portal of Ellis Island. The material chance is sought and is won, as the common end of American society. That *means* is the end, and in fact there is appalling absence of civilization in America: there is here no *end.*

This appears to be the plot of "The American Scene" by Henry James, a book written soon after the turn of the century, when the author returned to look at his homeland after twenty-five years of living abroad. Scribners have just republished the work, while the fame of Henry James is very high and new books and articles in magazines about him are very numerous. The re-publication is also timely with an unprecedented concern over whither America, and with the daily demonstration on a planetary scale of the fact that the United States is powerful indeed, but almost insanely incapable of deciding, making up its mind, and accepting or creating a social and cultural world to match the conquered continents of America and the atom.

The plot of "The American Scene" is much clearer than those of most of James's famous novels, but still it is hardly expounded in algebraically clear, indicative sentences. "It is no more a guide book," W. H. Auden says in the Introduction, "than the 'Ode to a Nightingale' is an ornithological essay." The manner of exposition is altogether impressionistic, indirect and gradually cumulative, and the focus is highly professional and assertively subjective. The style of writing is mature H. James (the three short essays of 1870 out of "Portraits of Places" included in the volume hardly count), and that is a large and interesting subject exhaustively covered one place or another but an outside interest here. Auden is brief but brilliant on it in his introduction. The style is, of course, wonderful, but, for our common American taste, doubtlessly bordering closely, on occasions, the "wet." It is not easy to read fast, for anybody.

With all his complexities and shadings and careful distinctions, Henry James proclaims his basic critical judgment of America's cultural vacuity with a warm and unambiguous and surprising heartiness which is angry, certainly, and which is warmed as well by the confidence and sureness of love for the object condemned. Summarizing in the last pages, which were omitted from the original American edition, as, perhaps, too apt to disguise his love, James tries to be disturbingly unobscure, and is, surely, humanly and simply moving:

> Of how grimly, meanwhile, under the annual rigour, the world, for the most part, waits to be less ugly again, less despoiled of interest, less abandoned to monotony, less forsaken of the presence that forms its only resource, of the one friend to whom it owes all it ever gets, of the pitying season that shall save it from its huge insignificance—of so much as this, no doubt, I sufficiently renewed my vision, and with plenty of the reviving ache of a question already familiar.

All in all, at best, James found a blank, a patiently and appealingly waiting nothing. He had just enjoyed a pleasing sail on a river of extreme natural beauty, which is, for his argument, any unspoiled American river. Compared to the streams of the old world, compared to the ancient Nile itself, "here surely, then [in the New World of America] was the greater antiquity of the two, the antiquity of the infinite *previous*, of the time, before Pharaohs and Pyramids, when everything was still to come. It was a Nile, in short, without the least implication of a Sphinx or, still more if possible, of a Cleopatra . . . the primitive *plate*, in perfect condition, but with the impression of History all yet to be made."

Challenged less agreeably "by the general pretension of the Pullman"—"with the general pretension to charm, the general conquest of nature and space, affirmed by the great monotonous rumble which seems forever to say to you: 'See what I'm making of all this—see what I'm making, what I'm making!'" James replies:

> I see what you are *not* making, oh, what you are ever so vividly not. . . . If I were one of the painted savages you have dispossessed, or even some tough reactionary trying to emulate him, what you are making would doubtless impress me more than what you are leaving unmade; for

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in that case it wouldn't be to *you* I should be looking in any degree for beauty or for charm. Beauty and charm would be for me in the solitude you have ravaged, and I should owe you my grudge for every disfigurement and every violence, for every wound with which you have caused the face of the land to bleed. No, since I accept your ravage, what strikes me is the long list of the arrears of your undone; and so constantly, right and left, that your pretended message of civilization is but a colossal recipe for the *creation* of arrears, and of such as can but remain forever out of hand. You touch the great lonely land . . . you convert the large and noble sanities that I see around me, you convert them one after the other to crudities, to invalidities, hideous and unashamed; and you so leave them to add to the number of the myriad aspects you simply spoil, of the myriad unanswerable questions that you scatter about as some monstrous unnatural mother might leave a family of unfathered infants on doorsteps or in waiting-rooms. . . .

When nobody cares or notices or suffers, by all one makes out, when no displeasure, by what one can see, is ever felt or ever registered, why shouldn't you, you may indeed ask, be as much in your right as you need? But in that fact itself, that fact of the vast general unconsciousness and indifference, looms, for any restless analyst who may come along, the accumulation, on your hands, of the unretrieved and the irretrievable!

Inevitably questions arise when an observer says such hard things about his and one's own land. To what extent do his observations hold true now, forty years after he made them? In finding America a kind of moon world, or world of aboriginal vacancy and cultural pre-history, did he display blindness of his own, failing to see legitimate elements of civilization which do exist? What are Henry James's norms of culture? Then, finally, conceding a grave portion of inescapable truth in the contention (almost, really, the truism) that America lacks an adequate culture while being materially prepared for any—does that poverty properly exasperate and depress the sympathetic analyst more than it should, as a promise, stimulate and please him?

These questions come constantly to mind when following the series of impressions, of "facts," by which James builds up his broad picture and fundamental thesis. Each answer shows James partly wrong, but today, before what is, none but the most recklessly optimistic could maintain that the whole balance of evidence inclines against this rare critic, on his "issue."

Of the Jamesian facts, it is possible to select only a few. (A statistician would find, I think, that Auden in the introduction is wrong when he wrote that they are, "even for James, amazingly and, one would have thought, fatally few." They seem to me to be unwieldy in numbers, and interlocked so logically that they are difficult to separate for particular attention.) First, in order to insure the good will of the critic, it may be just to note several high patriotic passages in "The American Scene." His treatment of the South in general, and of Richmond in particular indicate an appreciation of the Union, and an

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insight into American history, which are unusual and growing more unusual. In the Washington chapter, and specifically at Mount Vernon, before Washington himself, his large spirited patriotism is sensitive and articulate sufficiently to prove that his expatriation was not based on lack of patriotism.

The Concord passage, however, comes closest to giving us clearly the author's patriotic fact.

> "You know there has been a fight between our men and the King's"—one wouldn't have been surprised, that crystalline Sunday noon, where so little had changed, where the stream and the bridge, and all nature, and the *feeling,* above all, still so directly testify, at any fresh-sounding feel of such an announcement. . . . All the commemorative objects, the stone marking the burial-place of the three English soldiers, the animated image of the young belted American yeoman by Mr. Daniel French, the intimately associated element of the presence, not far off, of the old manse, interesting theme of Hawthorne's pen, speak of the spirit, no doubt, in one of the sublest tones of which official history is capable, and yet somehow leave the exquisite melancholy of everything unuttered. It lies too deep, as it always so lies where the ground has borne the weight of the short, simple act, intense and unconscious, that was to determine the event, determine the future in the way we call immortally. . . .
>
> The sense that was theirs and that moved them we know, but we seem to know better still the sense that wasn't and that couldn't, and that forms our luxurious heritage as our eyes, across the gulf, seek to meet their eyes; so that we are almost ashamed of taking so much, such colossal quantity and value, as the equivalent of their dimly-seeing offer. The huge margin they made for us, in a word, made by the gift of the little all they had—to the modesty of which amount the homely rural facts grouped there together have appeared to go on testifying—the brilliant advantage strikes the imagination that yearns over them as unfairly enjoyed at their cost. Was it delicate, was it decent—that is *would* it have been—to ask the embattled farmers, simple-minded, unwitting folk, to make us so inordinate a present with so little of the conscious credit of it? Which all comes indeed, perhaps, simply to the most poignant of all those effects of disinterested sacrifice that the toil and trouble of our forefathers produce for us. . . . Beautiful exceedingly the local Emerson and Thoreau and Hawthorne and (in a fainter way) *tutti quanti;* but beautiful largely because the fine old incident down in the valley had so seriously prepared their effect.

And at Concord, and *to* Concord, he tells the reason of a repeated complaint, in one of his frequent apostrophes:

> The country is colossal, and you but a microscopic speck on the hem of its garment; yet there's nothing else like you, take you all round, for we *see* you complacently, with the naked eye, whereas there are vast sprawling, bristling areas, great grey "centres of population" that spread, on the map, like irremediable grease-spots, which fail utterly of any appeal to our vision or any control of it, leaving it to pass them by as if they were not. If you are so thoroughly the opposite of one of these I don't say it's all your superlative merit; it's rather, as I have put it, your felicity, your good fortune, the result of the half-dozen happy turns of the wheel in your favour. . . . But it's your fortune, above all, that's your charm. One doesn't want to be patronizing, but you didn't, thank goodness, make yours. That's what the other places, the big ones that are as nothing to you, are trying to do, the country over—to make theirs.

It is by money or its philosophic equivalent that the individuals and "centres of population" and the country itself are trying to make their fortune. This is repeatedly said and with so great effectiveness and individuality that it is impossible not to quote farther:

> Here was the expensive as a power by itself, a power unguided, undirected, practically unapplied, really exerting itself in a void that could make it no response. . . . Nothing could be of a livelier interest—with the question of manners always in view—than to note that the most as yet accomplished at such a cost was the air of unmitigated publicity. . . .
>
> What had it been their idea to *do,* the good people—do, exactly *for* their manners, their habits, their intercourse, their relations, their pleasures, their general advantage and justification? . . . [Their very houses say] "expensive as we are, we have nothing to do with continuity, responsibility, transmission . . ."
>
> For what did it offer but the sharp interest of the match everywhere and everlastingply played between the short-cut and the long road?—an interest never so sharp as since the short-cut has been able to find itself so endlessly backed by money. Money in fact *is* the short-cut . . .

It would be an easy way out to call James simply a snob, and to say he is talking about only the richest suburban families on the make, and does not carry social significance because he is not proletarian-conscious and does not enter the basic and rudimentary problems of the great masses. Even families with the greatest new riches could point out that since the Depression, and after these decades of terrific taxes, and now in a period of limited profits, they really do not anticipate bigger houses ahead, or deeper swimming pools, and they would be quite happy to admit a stabilized level of expenditure with all the continuity and transmission James could want. That would be an easy way around the argument, but it would be an avoidance and not an answer or even a defense. The money in "The American Scene" is a real symbol standing for something real, whether you personally have bags full of it or not. The distribution of it among the population has great significance for "manners," Henry James would surely insist, but the absolute quantity of it which the whole society possesses can keep the argument alive, and the use it all is put to by all of society is the economic issue of fundamental interest. The money fact is part, and a great part of the issue of materialism, which no revolution in sight is meeting or solving.

★

With the poor, as such, James is unable to deal. He does not, indeed, recognize them as a separate class of Americans, and perhaps in this he could claim to be less snobbish than the most purely class-war Marxist. The immigrant, who is accidentally poor, for the time, fascinated him. In New York especially, but also in the New England hills, the newly arrived immigrant overwhelmed

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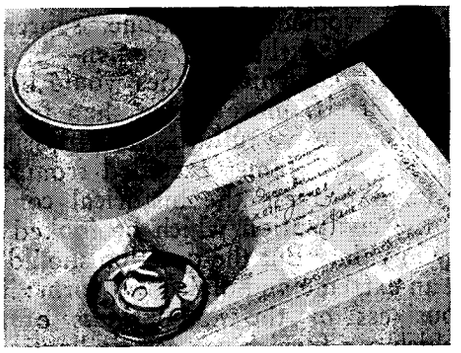
and bewildered James. It deserves the greatest possible emphasis in developing the theme of this book—the view of America—that James saw the immigrant immediately upon landing in the country throwing off the characteristics, the culture, which he bore at home, and becoming at once "a tolerably neutral and colorless image." The various "positive properties" brought here across the Atlantic disappear so completely in the American identity, that James, in spite of the fact that he realizes that centuries have gone to produce those properties and that they have been ingrained in these new Americans for generations, considers it useless to speculate upon their conceivable comminglings and makings-over and possible rising again to the surface, "affirming their vitality and playing their part." The immigrant would seem almost to epitomize James's American: the ready man, stripped of the past, almost without a language, capable appparently of anything, and possessing, at the time, nothing.

There is small need to multiply the "facts" which James assembles: His theme of the Margin, the literal chaos in which the small American tentatives float, which Auden notes in the introduction; how he finds all our buildings built deliberately to be torn down, obsolete, pathetically soon; the libraries offering the only sanctuaries from the omnipresent money life of the cities; the universities splendidly constructed and all ready, waiting for men of distinction to put them to fruitful use; the hotels as summations and epitomes of the country's "higher" life. There is one point, in James's wonderful "fact" about American women, that might well be noted, because it does not carry toward his main issue. James thinks that American women are marvelous, but that they are grotesque because all culture, all civilization outside of "business' is left altogether and freely in their hands. In the Washington chapter—where men, not "in trade," were coming back into life out of business and appearing again in the real world—he most clearly declares his views (in this book, of course, leaving out his novels). In the railway station at Savannah, "the American girl" speaks in the analyst's inward ear a long lament hinging on the complaint, "How can I do *all* the grace, *all* the interest, as I'm expected to?—yes, literally all the interest that isn't the mere interest on the money."

It is a clear absurdity of Henry James to exclude absolutely as he does the whole time and activity of money and business from the realm of significant civilization. Business and economics need not be, and are not, and were not in 1906, utterly faceless materialism. Their forms and manners and intermediate ends are too important to the whole of a country's culture, however defined, to rule out of consideration as ruthlessly as he does in his analysis. Perhaps, indeed, the



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whole thing is going the way the restless analyst himself did not dare to imagine. The business world of the men, who had withdrawn from culture, leaving women there alone, supreme and free, has absorbed the free women—in proportions and positions which James would be driven to judge, in itself, more fitting than in the old sphere of his exclusive culture. Is it possible that the business which James excluded from cultural analysis is to provide the historical commencement of the civilization which he looked for so diligently in vain. But the question should not be asked in an extreme and dialectical form: it is not *either* business *or* the non-business of Henry James which can furnish us with civilization, with manners and forms and beauties and social ends and extra-material hopes and abilities and satisfactions: it is both of them, surely, being as one, for a culture like a man is an identity of matter-spirit.

In "The American Scene" there is very scant reference to religion or to Christianity or to the Church. More is implied, certainly, than is stated. In direct comment the author only notes the absence of the "parson" as of the "patron" from the landscape, a comment more on the absence of the feudal residuum than on the absence of Church and religion. He notes that church buildings are dwarfed or lost in a non-ecclesiastical architecture. That is nearly all; the rest is Margin or is blank.

★

There simply is no adequate statement in this book of what in general James feels is lacking, of what he considers a culture to be. There are, as has been noted, many particular elements of civilization mentioned as "thinly" present—"stretched" so that they are lost in the "margin." Many of the elements he mentions as meagerly present or lacking have not come into this article, but one can certify that they never are integrated into a single definite statement. Most of them do appear to revolve around the manner in which a person lives with and gets along with his individual neighbor and with the whole population. They do appear thus to be related to charity, but in what appears to be largely a secular dress: manner and form and courtesy of human relations, and even more particularly, the form which is adapted to a numerous and materially advanced community. What is "the presence . . . the one friend" whose absence James laments at the conclusion of his book, in the first passage I have quoted above?

For a Christian, the immediate answer is, of course, the Faith, supporting a spiritual life of faith and hope and charity and the society of the Church. That is the immediate answer, but to prevent it from being simply an automatic answer, a facile and useless boast, the Christian also must ask questions and admit that now, today, in the United States and all over the world, he does not know all the answers, by any means. There is no "going" Christian culture on the American scene which a person can join even as one of "the converted," about whom Auden's introduction speaks. A Christian culture, whatever it might be, would be absolutely unique in being Christian; like other religious cultures, it would be spiritual; and like any conceivable culture, it would be material. It is not angelic; it has secular life with its religious.

Many Catholics who came to the country arrived from places where there did continue to exist a going Christian civilization: in the nineteenth century, most likely in Ireland, Italy, Rhenish Germany, Spain, etc. It is not true now, and the European condition has become largely American. But they came as immigrants, the people who fascinated James by their instantaneous loss of the cultural properties of their homelands and their so speedy acquisition of the neutral American color. This does not concern their keeping of the Faith—although many tragically lost that too. The physical environment, their relation to the soil, the physical towns and monuments, the day's schedule, their economic position, their politics, social status, schools, language and all the rest were different. And so the more intimate manners were different, and the forms, at once material and spiritual: at birth, in their homes, at school, at work, for courtship, marriage, friendship, death—these were not transportable, or when they might have been, in fact they were not transported. However fully one kept the Faith, one has not got thereby a formulated culture for the whole man.

The relevancy of Auden's introductory paragraphs about *"romanitas"* and the harassing question of the priority of "freedom" or "virtue" is not fully apparent to me. He seems to write as though an American *could* have virtue before freedom. In this culture sense, "with the question of manners always in view," Americans *have* freedom as they have a hand or an eye or their mind. And no American born today is born into the adequately operating going concern of a culture which indicates the "virtues" with which his life shall be concerned. There is no possibility for an American to have virtue prior to liberty—and what man in what nation is now so gently blessed?

America has many cultural traits, decidedly more than Henry James gave credit for when he observed the scene four decades ago. There are also partial or fractional cultures, with some remaining complexity and integration—with a spread over a portion and not only point of a necessary, whole life. Those who pretend that our fractions of culture, including the fractions of old Catholic cultures, are truly adequate for a man

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to live and breathe and create and find human satisfaction in, err. They may superficially claim to make the accomplishment of virtue easier, and may seem to mitigate the constant torment of decision, but it is not true. It is positively untrue, and tends to destroy the validity of moral principles by removing them from application to the existing real choices, to eliminate the essential apostolic content of any Christian culture, to create a self-imposed ghetto in which the straightened culture grows fossilized, out of touch with the broad world, brittle, and certain of eventual destruction; and it generates angry men who only resist new experience and knowledge and lead half lives. No, the American's task, which others will not likely avoid, is to select and choose, to embrace and grow in, to discover and possess and develop the cultural fractions and traits which are left over, for the most part, or which are growing new over the scene of his contemporary life, to a degree, I think, which James did not fully reckon. Amidst the traditions, the manners and forms and routine, the words and acts and the beauties of civilization, the modern Christian cannot know where to find *everything*, or to get for himself a happy pattern ready-made, or to solve *all* his problems. He should feel he can increasingly know in his own assembled culture, if he seeks it, "of the presence that forms its only resource, of the one friend to whom it owes all it ever gets, of the pitying season that shall save it from its huge insignificance."

Communications

REPUDIATION IN ST. LOUIS

Bronx, N. Y.

TO the Editors: In the name of the many Catholic members of the Teachers Guild and out of respect for the truth, I protest against the unwarranted slur upon that organization in the letter of Margaret C. Byrne published in your issue of October 4.

She writes, claiming to be citing examples of "unwise opponents of anti-Semitism":

> Groups like the Association of Biology Teachers, the Jewish Teachers Association, the Teachers Union, the Teachers Guild, the Public Education Association, which have manifested the spirit of the lynch law, which in its basest and most ignoble form leads to the murder of individuals and to the subjection of nations.

I shall leave the defense of the other organizations mentioned in that sentence to their members, but I deny most emphatically, and I should know being one of its founders, that the Teachers Guild, ever or at any time, "manifested the spirit of the lynch law." The violence of Miss Byrne's language does not represent the writer as being a tolerant person, herself.

In trying so hard to build up a case against the opponents of anti-Semitism she would appear to ally herself

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with the anti-Semites. Her tortuous reason and intemperate language remind one of the Christian Front tactics. In the reference to the Fieldston School play, she gives the impression of supporting Father Coughlin's anti-Semitic views, or else why object to the showing of two schoolboys as the victims of his anti-Semitic propaganda?

Every thinking person will agree with Miss Byrne when she says that Jews are not served by "supporting attacks on Catholics, by encouraging anti-Catholic magazines," but neither are Catholics served by shielding the hatemongers who call themselves Catholics. Speaking of magazines, who supported "Social Justice"?

Miss Byrne is fond of accusing the opponents of anti-Semitism of being "confused" but I found her letter one mass of confusion. She resembles a shell-shocked soldier who suddenly turns his guns against his comrade.

If we are to be, as all Catholics should be, fighters against intolerance, we must continue to fight it even when it crops out among our own friends. There is nothing gained by shutting our eyes to it in our own ranks and then shouting, "You, too!" whenever outsiders call our attention to it. Such tactics are childlike and fool no one but ourselves. THE COMMONWEAL has been one Catholic magazine that has always faced this issue squarely.

Contrary to Miss Byrne's statement, the Teachers Guild has throughout its long history stood in the forefront of the fighters for tolerance. It has attracted to its cause idealistic teachers and supervisors of all races and creeds. To accuse such people of advocating lynch law is an offense against common decency. Catholics should be the last to forget the Guild's battle against the Oregon anti-Parochial School law back in 1919 and 1920.

JOHN J. DONOHUE.

"THE CHILDREN'S HOLLYWOOD"

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I was much impressed by your editorial in THE COMMONWEAL for September 20. It seems to me to make a very definite and important point which has been largely overlooked, when it says, "The transference of an imaginative piece of literature to the screen is an operation whose wisdom is, in any age group in any case, fraught with question. Does it improperly stop the imagination by 'setting' the work in the particular imaginative picture of the producer, and thus stop readers from reading with their own active sympathies and imaginations?"

My answer is emphatically that it does. In support of my feeling I cite the following instance. Some years ago a group of nine year olds prepared a marionette show from the story of "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." It was the year of the Disney production of that tale. The marionette play as produced by them was an echo of Disney. Children have excellent memories, many of the lines were just as they had heard them in the motion picture; characters, sets, costumes, all showed that, as far as possible, they were trying to reproduce the film.

Shortly after another group of the same age made a marionette play from the story of Aladdin. Children's unspoiled imagination needs no movie pattern and the second marionette play had a freshness, a spontaneity and

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a childlike fun that the first one lacked. It was an experience in inventiveness rather than memory work.

It is with sorrow that I see one childhood classic after another taken out of the child's own imaginative world to become for him a part of the movie world which—no matter how many pictures are ostensibly made for children—is an adult's and not a child's world. I realize that as you say "there are ins and outs." Movies in the present age play, and should play, a part in children's lives, but what you say about children's classics on the screen needs to be emphasized. I am grateful to you for the editorial.

ANNE THAXTER EATON.

The Stage & Screen

The Iceman Cometh

THIS IS not a simple business. To begin with, there are only two living dramatists whose work could be published simultaneously with its stage production: O'Neill and Shaw. For the critic the significance of this fact is precise: it means that the whole wearing waste of program dittos is avoided; that all work is traceable; that written character description can be balanced against casting; most of all, that motive can be matched with result. However, there is a further dimension which must, I think, be added to the publication* and production of Mr. O'Neill's present play and this will be the statements he has made about it to the press. These statements, firmly grounded in quotes, are all motive (or perhaps it would be fairer to call them *warnings* of motive) and as such, must also be fitted into the elongated nightly doings at the Martin Beck. They are these: to Tom Prideaux, in a feature piece in *Life* magazine, Mr. O'Neill stressed the significance of his title, and came "as close as he ever has to stating the core of his philosophy: 'For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul.'" To an interviewer in the Sunday *Times*, Mr. O'Neill again warned of his title, and stated with more particular reference to the philosophy of this play, "It will take man a million years to grow up and obtain a soul." Now, I can find no quarrel whatsoever between his script and his production—so little quarrel, in fact, that I should like to underline the entire honesty of the Theater Guild's management, of Robert Edmond Jones's sterling set, of Eddie Dowling's direction, and of the truly startling excellence of each and every one of the actors—it follows that it is mainly in the light of his own remarks that I must try to judge Mr. O'Neill's piece.

The play is period stuff, time 1912, delivered in four acts taking four hours and fifteen minutes. Set in a gin-mill of the period, it presents fifteen characters, all roomers at the "hotel," all outcasts for one reason or another, all drunk, and each one engaged in his own particular "pipe dream," sprung from the bottle. A further character, a sober but desperate young man, is also pres-

*The Iceman Cometh. Random House. $2.75.

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ent, having come to ask moral help of the hero of the piece, Larry Slade, one-time syndicalist-anarchist. The occasion is the eve of the proprietor's birthday and the group is gathered to wait for Hickey, gay salesman, whose periodic binges in the joint have always spelt booze for all and whose derisive repeated quip about his wife "in de hay wid de iceman" indicates but does not interpret the title. As the exposition progresses, we learn each character plus his dream, discovering that while all are failures, they are self-failures chiefly. Excluding the stranger, a kind of conspiracy of approval is established, with each man supporting his brother's illusion. With the appearance of Hickey, however, the drama begins to spin. It is immediately apparent that Hickey has changed. Salesman of peace now, rather than hoopla, he defines this state as possible only when emptied of all illusion whatsoever; and from here to the dénouement, he proceeds to force each of his old comrades to relinquish his "pipe dream" by living it and failing at it. At the dénouement when all are sunk in despair, when no bottle holds hope, when his "peace" has smashed, Hickey in true panic ironically destroys his own "pipe dream." Overtly confessing his crime, he inadvertently confesses his motive for it: that he has killed his wife not from love but from hate, that the Iceman he had nominated for her was Death, that his peace is hell.

But this is not the play's end. In counterpoint to this theme, the young stranger's continues. Having committed a similar though more hidden crime, and having appointed his own judge, it remains for this judge, Larry, the anarchist, to accomplish the curtain. Larry, whose "pipe dream" has been, among all the rest, the only untenable one—the dream of death—resolves into Hickey's sole convert. Wishing to reject all of life, at the same time as he is forced by circumstance to act in it, he is, as the curtain falls on the slowly reviving wrecks surrounding him, the only one for whom the tense of the title tells: *The Iceman Cometh.* And I may add, in parenthesis, there is everything to be said for that formal cliché—a plot should be solved in a sentence.

There are, of course, two levels on which any creative work can be judged: the esthetic, and the level of meaning. And it is by his works and reputation, as well as his pronouncements, that O'Neill merits whole consideration. On the esthetic level, I feel it is by a combination of daring and gaucherie that this play is built. It is daring, for instance, to create a character (Hickey) whose purpose is in question until three minutes before the final curtain. It is daring to use a novelistic (mystery-pulp) attack, where the resolution of themes is reserved until the end, and endlessly spoken by the appointed detective. And I suppose it is daring to pull period stuff at our exact moment in history. On the other hand, any work in which the key term ("pipe dream") has to be employed **forty-two times in four acts,** would seem to me to be poorly written. And the spread of his canvas—seventeen characters to push around—really exposes this dramatist's self-indulgence in audience-time. For, while the characters which interest him are presented far too subtly, I think, in the round, the rest are dealt out in a kind of

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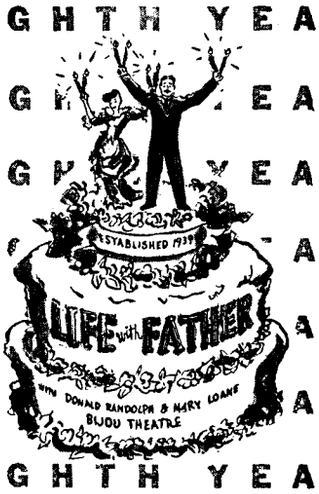

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Wagnerian sham-scheme. It is a truism that O'Neill wrights for actors. But I think here it is a truth that not only the outstanding skills of Dudley Digges, James Barton, Carl Benton Reid and Paul Crabtree, but also the less heralded excellences of Morton L. Stevens, Tom Pedi, and Marcella Markham and her attendant tarts, have wrought even more profoundly for him.

But it is on the level of content that judgment must become serious. There are, I think, two interpretations possible for Mr. O'Neill's conception. The psychoanalytical and the theological. The first is perfectly simple, but the author has himself chosen the second, and I feel it is important to try to undertand why. I feel there is a giant American ignorance behind all of the opera of this American giant. In his compassion, in his constant cry after God, O'Neill has steadily invented rather than learned. In respect of his present play, there is of course no intelligence in attempting to attach symbolism to the plain words from Saint Mark; there is no intelligence in opposing "death" to the "soul"; and there is only an all-American intelligence in attempting to prove a religion of drink. At the same time, I can find neither vulgarity nor fakery in the extent of his confusions. They are native confusions. Nevertheless, I think it is time he applied himself to the primary science and chose his God or gods, devil or devils, or their several lack. In the meantime, I feel it is quite possible to say he has accomplished here a great American play. But I think the tribute is a sad one. (*At the Martin Beck.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

No Bowl of Cherries

YOUR critic finds himself in an embarrassing and anomalous position over two new biographical films. He is greatly enthusiastic about a musical movie of practically no depth (based on the career of Al Jolson) and is quite luke-warm about a serious picture with an important subject (based on the struggles of Sister Kenny to gain recognition).

"The Jolson Story" provides top-notch entertainment. Its script by Stephen Longstreet has juggled the facts in Jolson's life, particularly in connection with his marriages, but definitely tries to tell a convincing story; and it succeeds in being lively even in the touching closing scenes concerned with the failure of Al's marriage to Julie (obviously meant to be Ruby Keeler, and sympathetically played by Evelyn Keyes). Except for one mawkish, unnecessary sequence, Director Alfred E. Green avoided the overdoses of sentiment that so frequently sicken a musical biography. This sticky scene shows Asa Yoelson as a boy (Scotty Beckett) running away from home, and later being discovered by his Jewish parents (played with distinction and charm by Ludwig Donath and Tamara Shayne) in a Catholic orphanage singing "Ave Maria" with the choir. But on the whole, Asa's story with its disappointments and successes in vaudeville, musical comedies and movies makes interesting background for the procession of songs sung by Jolson through the years. Producer Sidney Skolsky's selecting Larry Parks to play Jolson has proved one of those bright inspirations that Hollywood folk get occasionally; for Parks, relatively

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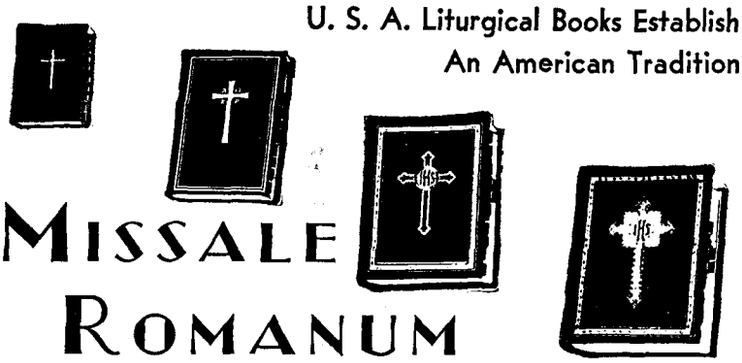

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little known up to now, turns in a real performance that has caught the mannerisms and style of the famous blackface singer and that is stirring for its sincerity of characterization. Skolsky was further inspired when he got Jolson himself to do the singing. William Demarest and Bill Goodwin are exceedingly good in the supporting cast; and the picture, photographed in technicolor, has many moving scenes of Jewish home life and backstage drama. But its high spots are the well-synchronized Parks-Jolson handling of the songs. "Mammy," "I'm Sitting on Top of the World," "Swanee," "Toot, Toot, Tootsie," "April Showers," "California" and many others were hits in their day; and they'll be hits again after you see and hear Parks and Jolson do them.

If a good cast and intentions were enough to make a good picture, *"Sister Kenny"* would be a first-rater. Rosalind Russell as the famed nurse whose treatment for infantile paralysis is the main topic of the film, Alexander Knox as the Australian doctor who believed in and stuck by this woman, Dean Jagger as the man who loved her and lost her to her "cause," Philip Merivale as the stuffy, stubborn doctor who refused to believe, and others do a good job of portraying the characters in this prolonged argument on alienated muscles and spasms. But the script is talky; and Producer-director Dudley Nichols was more absorbed in its message and the fighting heroine than in telling about them through effective cinema. Actually a fair-minded doctor (if such there be) should discuss this film's thesis, which, it seems to me, raises false hopes for the Kenny method in treating poliomyelitis. The villain of the plot is organized medicine (a group of die-hards who refuse to accept new concepts). But after establishing the fact that it is a dangerous thing to traffic in human lives, the script goes on and on to say that the time has come to abolish antiquated methods and that people are more important than the system. This may be true, but just showing Sister Kenny curing patient after patient in the film while the doctors struggle with failure does not tally with the facts in actual practice. No doubt there is much to be said in favor of the Kenny treatment and obviously there are points to be made against "organized medicine," but if the debate is to be waged in a movie, let both sides have their say. "Sister Kenny," as it now stands with its one-sided argument and many dull sequences, is not the answer.

Moviegoers who do like a little undisguised propaganda in their screen fare might very wisely hunt up the new March of Time. *"World Food Problem"* shows what is being done throughout the world to meet the threats of starvation hanging over so many peoples. Scenes varying from the gay "Chiquita Banana" broadcasting her food conservation appeals, to the shipment of food and clothing through Care, Inc., to UNRRA's large-scale handling of grains, livestock and farm implements for stricken countries, are portrayed in MOT's usual lively photography and editorializing. The views of breadlines, starving Chinese, Greeks and others will wring your heart and win your assent regarding the need for a new organization after UNRRA closes shop.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

HEAVEN HELP US

In 1940 we published a nightmare of a novel, **MOSCOW 1979** by Christiane and Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn ($3.00). The authors see the Pope of forty years hence as a Filipino, ruling from San Francisco, and the Church as the last unconquered enemy of Communism. No one believed a word of it then, but as Graham Greene lately said:

> "It must be four years since I first read Mr. Leddihn's MOSCOW 1979 but the book remains vividly in my mind, due to the extraordinary strength of Mr. Leddihn's imagination. What seemed then a book of wild fantasy, however, now seems threateningly possible."

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The Labor Movement

The Next Logical Step

THE WHOLE business of wages and prices chasing each other around the mulberry bush is getting pretty discouraging to many in the labor movement. And though they may feel that this is the fault of a perverse and stupid Congress, which it mainly is, even so they must recognize that it is also a condition that decidedly prevails and that therefore it might be a good idea to think up something a little more original than another demand for more dough.

In this spot some people may think it smart to go the whole hog and say, "What we want is shares of stock. What we want is seats on the board of directors. What we want is a 50-50 cut of the profits. What we want is decentralized factories out in the country, with every man having his own house and a large vegetable garden, with maybe a pig and some chickens and a part interest in a cow, say a quarter interest for convenience."

As a matter of fact, it is an excellent idea to keep repeating that this is about what we really do want, that this is the sort of thing that is necessary if we are ever to create a truly just, decent, stable Christian democratic society. This is even the sort of thing that is necessary if we are to reconcile the assembly line and the human soul, or if we are to adjust the demands of craftsmanship and the demands of efficiency. Right now, however, anyone who starts demanding these things in a collective bargaining conference will immediately be labeled a crackpot, and a communist crackpot at that. And it will do him little good to start quoting Pius XI.

In a sense too he is a crackpot. Because he is going too fast. The essence of the crackpot, after all, is the failure to recognize the limitations of human nature, including his own. It isn't that the crackpot believes that with God all things are possible, although some of them also believe that. It is rather that he believes that all things are possible with or without God, and he believes this because he is too lazy or too impatient or too inept to do the hard, grueling labor of changing things and people slowly, which is the only way they can be changed when God declines the honor, as He so frequently does, of working a miracle.

All this is an introduction to a burst of applause for the recent conference in Boston of the American Management Conference, which conducted a very intelligent discussion of the guaranteed annual wage. A few years back labor men like Phil Murray, who asked for the annual wage in bargaining with the steel companies, were accused of crackpot talk. It wasn't crackpot talk, however, because the times were ripe for it; it was the next logical step; it was not only necessary, but possible, and possible with only a modicum of intervention from the Almighty. Since then other unions beside the steelworkers have taken up the cry. The CIO Packinghouse Workers, seeing that it could be done by the Hormel Company even in a highly seasonal industry, is now pushing the demand with big outfits like Swift and Armour. At Boston the case was made for the unions by George Baldanzi, bright young vice-president of the Textile Workers, CIO, and William Gomberg of the Ladies' Garment Workers, AFL.

Of course there is a great deal of unnecessary confusion and argument over the word "guaranteed." The high-water mark in this area was reached by Charles E. Wilson, president of General Motors, who recently got off the

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inspired observation, "A guaranteed annual wage is impossible unless you have a stable economy, and if you have a stable economy you don't need a guaranteed annual wage." Obviously this releases Mr. Wilson and General Motors from any further obligation.

Nothing in this world can be finally and completely guaranteed. The important thing is that employers, and unions, should genuinely try—and keep trying. It is childish to assume that American workers are not acutely aware of the fact that no matter how seasonal or tricky the industry, the employers therein manage somehow to guarantee themselves a pretty adequate annual wage.

Anti-CP's Are Hotter

IT REALLY is a pain to have to go on talking about the communists. For one thing, it is so unoriginal. But then you see another news commentator saying that in France, for example, nobody wants to form a government without the Communist Party because of course the CP controls the major labor unions. And so you have to admit that the question of CP's gaining or losing strength in American unions can be an important one.

United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (about 500,000): The CP's retained a firm grip on this union, opposition mustering about one-fifth of votes at best. For the first time, however, opposition has been organized on a national scale and will bear watching next year or the year after or the year after.

Shipbuilding Workers (about 150,000): John Green and anti-CP's kept control, with CP opposition losing considerable strength since the close fight of last year.

Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers (about 100,000): Anti-CP opposition to Robinson administration only few votes from controlling convention. Chances excellent for slate led by Secretary-Treasurer Leary to defeat Robinson slate in coming referendum.

United Shoe Workers (about 50,000): Following ill-advised resignation of Frank McGrath, anti-CP president, the CP faction gained control of convention and stands well to win referendum.

Gas, Coke and Chemical Workers (about 50,000): A strong CP drive just barely headed off by Wagner administration.

The CIO as a whole (about 6,000,000): The ebb and flow of strength in different unions has probably left CP's and anti-CP's in same relative position at time of last CIO convention which was about two-sevenths of votes for the CP's. Much depends on whether Reuther can consolidate his strength in Auto Workers. The difference now is that anti-CP's are hotter than ever before.

Also, for the first time, a united front organization of anti-CP's has been formed in the CIO Committee for Democratic Trade Unionism. This group combines Actists, Social Democrats and plain trade unionists. It includes important officials from auto, shipbuilding, textile, retail, oil, plaything, railroad and utility unions. So far it is just a New York City outfit, but expects to be statewide soon and when the CIO convenes next month it may well become nationwide. It is alert, articulate, progressive, and well-equipped to meet the Stalinist challenge. It is, in short, the most hopeful thing that has happened within the CIO since the CP's became a problem back in the days when John L. Lewis first started hiring them with such reckless abandon.

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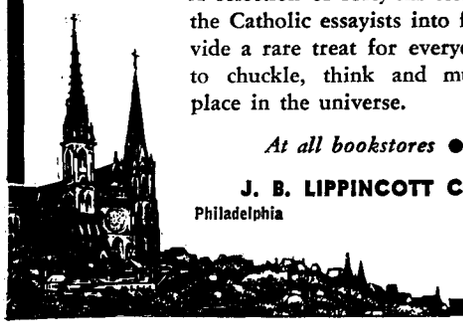

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Books of the Week

The Great Challenge. Louis Fischer. Duell. $4.00.

A FASCINATING and important topic has been, up to now, waiting vainly for a writer and publisher. For the American public there has been no book devoted to a special kind of victim of the Russian Revolution. No description has been available of the men who became at some stage disillusioned and disappointed by the Soviet Union and changed from more or less friendly observers or supporters into vehement enemies of Lenin's and Stalin's régime. It would be revealing to study the development of such former Soviet officials as Bessedowski, Agabekov, Barmine and Kravchenko, or to analyze the transformations in the attitudes of men like W. H. Chamberlin, the careful, scholarly correspondent, Edmund Wilson, for a time a typical and prominent exponent of literary pro-Sovietism, and F. Borkenau, who writes today in the *Dublin Review* after having been on the staff of the Third International.

Such a study, written in a dispassionate way, fearing no facts, would be an important contribution to the understanding of the strange, exciting and terrifying period of history which is the present. It would trace the various ways in which former communists and pro-communists turned, sometimes after a Trotskyite interlude, into admirers of Hayek's "Road to Serfdom" and authoritative contributors to the New York *Times, Readers Digest* and *Fortune.* The most efficient publicists of the anti-Soviet camp are former friends of the Soviet Union—Freda Utley and Max Eastman as well as ex-Ambassador Bullitt, who, during his diplomatic stay in Moscow after 1934, discovered the true meaning of Russian history, and of the world-revolutionary statements of Lenin and Stalin.

In this book a special chapter would be devoted to pro-Soviet foreign correspondents, who acted as independent public relations officers for the Soviet régime. Two men would be particularly prominent: First, Paul Scheffer, the representative of the *Berliner Tageblatt,* who, after years of enjoying sources of information in general not accessible to his colleagues, turned more and more anti-Soviet—a development which brought a forced end to his stay in Moscow; secondly, Louis Fischer, who was once the most outstanding friendly interpreter of the Soviet world in liberal publications. Fischer lasted longer than his German colleague. He survived the definite eclipse of the Trotsky camp, and he played an important rôle as a journalistic helper in the fight for the recognition of the Soviet régime by the USA. In 1930, he had the opportunity to prove by a very useful and indispensable book, "Soviets in World Affairs," that Lenin's and Stalin's régime was always for peace, always the innocent victim of interventions and attacks. During the Spanish Civil War, after the purges of Stalin had reached their peak, Fischer broke with the Soviet régime. In 1942, he took a public critical stand toward the Soviet régime in his memoirs, "Me and Politics."

The stand taken in 1942 is maintained by Louis Fischer in this new volume. Its pages bring together autobiographical remarks and impressions about his travels in wartime, particularly to England and India, reflections on world affairs and on the wrong development of the Soviet régime under Stalin, and finally some prophetical remarks on the future. Louis Fischer is an exceedingly and, therefore, touchingly naïve man, as well as a good connoisseur

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of many details of Soviet life. He is an excellent journalist, a somewhat boring, shallow speculator about coming developments and an enthusiast about plans for the future as generous as they are vague. His book is a challenge to all kinds of appeasement. Stalin failed when he tried to appease Hitler; he was attacked by Nazi Germany. So, it would be disastrous to appease the USSR now, though Fischer is also against a brutal policy advocating preventive war. The foreign policies of the USSR are characterized as dominated by power considerations, by pan-Slavistic imperialism, by drives for economic and political security which must result, if not checked, in limitless expansion. "Britain's imperialism is in retreat, American imperialism is not full-fledged. Russian imperialism is dynamic, expansive and unconcerned with the destinies of human beings over whom it spreads like a glacier. . . ." But stopping of Russia is not sufficient. A victory of true democracy is necessary everywhere, that is, the disappearance of colonial rule, exploitation, racial prejudices, etc. And if Russia is not willing to accept world government, then world government must be formed by the four-fifths of the world outside the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, the difficulties facing this program are not discussed. Fischer indulges either in dark pessimism or vapid hopes for the best.

I think the book will do some good. As an introduction to the world politics of our era, it will serve for readers who have no time or no interest to read more complete descriptions and who are eager to obtain, with the help of attractive stories and stimulating sketches, general impressions of Russia or India, of the mentality prevailing during the war in Palestine or among English leaders, etc. Some remarks of Fischer against the necessity of making too great concessions to Russia are beyond doubt impressive. Less impressive is the undisguised happiness with which Fischer enjoys his intimacy with such men as Sumner Welles or Gandhi. Least impressive are his attempts to prove that Stalin's imperialistic totalitarian régime is essentially different from that of Lenin (only occasionally does Fischer admit that he was wrong during his pro-Soviet period). It is, for instance, surprising to read that Lenin "willingly recognized the independence of Finland and the three Baltic states." Lenin did it because revolutions and reconquest by the Red Armies had failed. Stalin's régime is based upon the principles of Lenin's totalitarian single-party dictatorship.

No feeling for the depths of the world crisis of our time is to be found in Fischer's pages. His utilitarian-hedonistic humanitarianism is "not enough," despite some vague generalities about justice. This must be said because Fischer likes to present himself as a prophet threatening mankind with doom—"500 million deaths in the future atomic war"—if human beings, particularly those in power, do not follow his advice. (In reality, he has no advice to offer.) It may be finally noted that it would be very dangerous to rely upon the inside information presented by Fischer. I would like to see the text of Stalin's letter addressed to the Pope in 1944, in which he proposed a merger of the Orthodox and Catholic churches, and which was finally turned down by the Vatican—the negotiations of Flynn had no success.

To sum up: Measured by the highest standards, Fischer's book is very unsatisfactory. As an accumulation of factual information it has some value.

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IT IS NOW a decade since Georges Bernanos was first published in this country and it seems proper to recall that he is perhaps the only Catholic novelist, with the exception of Leon Bloy, to be concerned with the mystical life. It is a difficult and even dangerous subject for a novelist and Bernanos has not escaped theological controversy in his own country.

Of five-and-dime store miracles, of pledges, cures, conversions and of similar conniptions, "Catholic" fiction in this country has had what can only in charity be called more than its share. Such stuff is largely past now and if we have not yet begun to produce a fiction of distinction, it is at least on the way in the works of such young writers as J. F. Powers. And there is currently the work of the Englishmen, Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh, both extraordinarily facile and elegant writers, both converts, both not unmindful that the salt has lost a good deal of its savor. In their work we find a deep knowledge and appreciation of Catholicism, a full cognizance of the workings of grace, the whole rendered with considerable art. But not their most intense admirers could say they have written of the mechanics of the interior life. It is thoroughly possible that they could and may yet do so, and it is no discredit to them that they have not. Yet it seems possible that their interest in and conversion to Catholicism lacked a mystical basis, if only because so many English-speaking Catholics today, laity and clergy alike, in effect no longer believe in the interior life.

So while English-writing Catholics have declined the gambit, the good ones through humility or uncertainty and the bad ones because they and their public have been brought up to like such good solid things as cures and novenas, non-Catholic mystics have not. There is the work of L. H. Meyer, that of Mr. Huxley, and even Mr. Maugham in his fashion has written a novel of mysticism. Perhaps in Luxembourg or Holland or China there is some Catholic who has also written a novel of the interior life. But thus far in this country we do not know him; he has not been translated. There remains M. Bernanos alone and his audacity and pity, a juxtaposition found only in the saint or the genius. Whether Bernanos is a saint or not we must leave to future generations, but of his genius there is no doubt.

This new novel, first published in France in 1929, is designed to be read between the two novels already published here. The outward story is simple enough; the technique largely one of alternate elision and density. At times one feels Bernanos should tell us more about his people but in the end we understand that with great art he has told us exactly as much as we need know. In the country retreat of a widowed French Academician, de Clergerie, there live with him his mother and his daughter, Chantal. Psychotic, avid for glory, tormented by various shapeless fears, de Clergerie has surrounded himself with a coterie of friends, intellectuals and academicians like himself, including La Perouse, a Freudian psychiatrist, and the Abbé Cenabre, a solitary priest whose enormous will power has become perverted so that although he has lost his faith he has neither renounced the Church nor relinquished the priesthood. The mother's jealousy for her daughter-in-law had become hatred and contributed to the latter's death. Her daughter, Chantal, inheriting both her mother's sensitivity and what must awkwardly be called repressed mysticism, and

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her father's intellectuality, is, almost unknown to herself, a mystic. She superintends his household, the only ordinary outward signs of her true calling being evident charity, good humor and humility. There are other indications, of course, but these are variously misread and misinterpreted so that de Clergerie first calls in La Perouse, feeling his daughter needs psychoanalysis and then, La Perouse being confounded by the girl's simplicity, the Abbé Cenabre.

In his anxiety to be fashionable, the father has also surrounded himself with a most heterogeneous group of servants, whose only common quality is that they once worked in the home of the great or the fashionable. The most evil of these, a depraved white Russian chauffeur, Fiodor, has the first and surest knowledge of Chantal's true nature or calling. Here, Bernanos is exact: he who hates good the most is the most sensitive to its presence.

The girl's confessor and spiritual director, Chevance, has died before the book opens. Chevance was also the only person who knew the Abbé Cenabre's secret. At her father's request, Cenabre goes to speak with Chantal and surprises her in ecstasy. She in turn sees him as he approaches her, first as the black tree from which Judas hung himself. What earlier ecstasies may have been, Bernanos does not tell us, but in this one Chantal understands with the most brutal clarity the supreme necessity of redemption.

This comes clear in their interview, in which Cenabre betrays himself, thinking Chevance had perhaps previously betrayed his secret to Chantal. Chevance had not done so—indeed, Chevance died such a lonely and forlorn death as to try even Chantal's faith—but when Cenabre betrays himself to her, Chantal understands why he first appeared to her that evening in the form that he did. In her mind she offers her death for Cenabre's redemption, and while he walks alone in the garden, shaken to the core by their meeting, he feels the iron of his will loosening, faith returns in almost tangible light. It is, of course, no surprise that while Cenabre is in the garden, Fiodor has murdered Chantal and killed himself.

For one not particularly at ease with the subject to thus summarize Bernanos's story is to do it a serious injustice. Probably no other living writer could with such delicacy and insight render the transition from vision and ecstasy back to normal sight and thought. Perhaps no other living writer could write such a book. Dense and often difficult to follow as it is (although the translator, Louise Varèse, writes assorted and limpid English) to even an American Catholic this book is a light and a revelation. For Bernanos speaks to us with no voice we have heard from anyone of our time. Is there one, just one religious in this country who writes or speaks as does Bernanos? Could it be possible that Bernanos, the French layman long in voluntary exile in Brazil with his six children, is speaking to us with a voice which the clergy and dedicated religions once knew how to utter but now have apparently forgot?

HARRY SYLVESTER.

The Happy Profession. Ellery Sedgwick. Little. $3.50.

FOR A FEW moments it looks as if Mr. Sedgwick had chosen an ironic title for this account of a long editorial career. It is the turn of the century and he is editing *Leslie's Monthly*. "How I dreaded publication day, the black twenty-second of the month!" That is the

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Next Week

THE ESTRADA INCIDENT, by George Doherty, is an account of the suppression of an organ of the Argentine Christian Democrats shortly after the election of Perón. In the course of its first seven weeks of publication ESTRADA attained a circulation of 30,000 copies; it carried articles by Bishop de Andrea, Jacques Maritain, Don Luigi Sturzo, Cardinal Spellman, the famous Belgian Jesuit, Père Charles, and others. What it was and how it was silenced.

IMPERIALISM AND THE UNITED STATES, by J. L. Benvenisti, is an interesting slant on the views of Henry Wallace. It asks quite frankly which is the Power whose present strength and policy most nearly qualify it as "imperialist" in the Soviet sense. Once this idea is defined and the actual conditions verified, it is a snap to show how Mr. Wallace in his foreign policy views is stigmatizing not Britain but his own native land.

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day he has to tackle the publisher for the fourteen hundred dollars due the authors printed in each issue. "The Boss" always tries to beat him down by means of such dodges as twenty percent discount for spot cash. It is a pitched battle the unpleasantness of which has to be prolonged by the editor each month when he confronts his individual contributors. This is bad enough but nothing compared to the black hour when Mr. Sedgwick is summoned to his office in the middle of the night to find that the pinching and skrimping has been of no avail; the cashier has made away with some ten thousand dollars (received with subscription orders), having played the horses at Jamaica for over a year in the wild hope that his luck would finally turn.

Yet Mr. Sedgwick did enjoy his life as an editor. He had long wanted to take over the *Atlantic;* he soon did away with its annual deficit and had things humming to the point where five hundred dollars worth of subscriptions came rolling in on one single day. But he liked everything about it—the stuffy atmosphere of Boston publishing, his travels to all quarters of the globe and even the long succession of panhandlers that found their way into his professional haunts.

His formula for success was sure-fire. He recognized that "the magazine's tastes are quiet and literary" and for that very reason that its occasional political forays "created sound and fury"—witness its support of Al Smith in 1928. Another reliable element was the bizarre, such as the curious girlhood diaries of Opal Whitney or the diabetic woman's account of her wanderings on foot among the crackers of northern Alabama. Autobiographical stuff from resourceful and heroic women in remote homesteads or city invalid chairs proved mightily effective in sustaining reader interest. It induced more and more readers to write in. Or there were colorful male figures such as James Hilton, bibliophile Edgar Newton, Erie-Canal Walter Edmonds and South Seas Nordaunt and Hall. The most worthy subject of prison reform added its inspiring touch. It all added up to a publishing formula which proved to be basically solid. Mr. Sedgwick's energetic editing enlisted wide support, even if today much that passed for color and adventure then sounds a bit pallid and staid.

Mr. Sedgwick gives a few revealing glimpses of his youth, but once he has launched himself on his editorial career, he allows little of his personal life to obtrude upon his narrative. It is only because his wife is involved somehow in one of his experiences with a bank that he even mentions the fact of his marriage. "The Happy Profession," then, is a book of measured enthusiasms, of professional friendships that do not go very deep and a narrative which seldom delves below the surface of things. But it does reveal Mr. Sedgwick from his youth as a very decent sort. If he had been less reticent and written more about himself, he would probably have supplied these entertaining professional memoirs with a real punch.

EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.

CONTRIBUTORS

Michael McLAVERTY is an Irish writer who has a novel soon to be published by Macmillan; this story is one from a collection shortly to be issued by Devin-Adair.
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